

He That Endures to the End

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: *Matthew 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

Love Grown Cold

There is something that we need to understand for the time in which we are living, that we may be able to conquer this sad announcement of Jesus. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many grows cold. One of the few books I have read in my years was the story of Hunze, a German lady who was in the Hitler's Youth, and who was converted into Adventism. The story of her conversion and of her simplicity, the way she and her husband trusted God, is beautiful. When it came to give of their tithe, they were out of a job because of the Sabbath-Sunday question, and they just had enough money for tithe, and after that, no job. But they decided that they would give the Lord their tithe even though they had no work, and they claimed His promise. And the Lord provided them with a job; at the last moment, but they got it. There she was with her long hair and all the simple realities of primitive godliness. Then, after the war she and her husband emigrated to the USA. But what a sad story unfolded as I continued to read. Because of her simplicity and primitive godliness, the

church in the United States told her it wasn't necessary to have these kinds of simplicities. She had beautiful long hair, but now there was a picture on the front with her short cut hair. And as she described in her book, primitive godliness was being made small of in her eyes by the members of the church. This story illustrated to me what Jesus had foreseen and expressed in Matthew 24.

Ever since the First and Second World War the iniquity abounded more and more, and that which people once had at heart—their love for Jesus, the simple, primitive godliness that was stirred in their hearts to give up all for Jesus; this love, beautiful, innocent, this childlike faith, unadulterated by complications of philosophy—faded. But before that, they in simple faith obeyed and followed God's directions unquestioningly and thus rose to a high state of spirituality. The description in that book was so beautiful to my heart because I love to talk of Jesus as well. They loved to talk of Jesus wherever they went. Their highest and tenderest affections were reserved for Him and His word. When you meet people like that, their influence is infectious. It affects you; it does something to you. But the question is, How can we retain such primitive godliness, which is so rare today? The apostasies in the churches soon dampen this childlike emotion. The complicated sinful human nature is easily affected, so that ultimately that shine, that appreciation, is gone. It has grown cold. This is what Jesus is announcing.

The forms of religion are still upheld, but the subject of religion is only just a subject; it is just a subject among many other subjects,

theology, the philosophy of religion; and after you have come to church and you have dealt with it, you go home and on to something else. And as a consequence, Christianity today does not spend a lot of time talking about Jesus. The first love has gone.

Where Is the Love of Jesus?

The Lord Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, plainly stated that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." He speaks of a class who have fallen from a high state of spirituality. {5T 538.2}

A people *who have fallen from a high state of spirituality*, fallen from this beautiful fervour for the Lord.

Let such utterances as these come home with solemn, searching power to our hearts. Where is the fervor, the devotion to God, that corresponds to the greatness of the truth which we claim to believe? {Ibid.}

That fervour for this truth, that *devotion to God, that corresponds to the greatness of the truth which we claim to believe.*

The love of the world, the love of some darling sin, has weaned the heart from the love of prayer and of meditation on sacred things. A formal round of religious services is kept up; but where is the love of Jesus? Spirituality is dying. Is this torpor, this mournful deterioration, to be perpetuated? Is the lamp of

truth to flicker and go out in darkness because it is not replenished by the oil of grace? {*Ibid.*}

That question is for us to deal with. It is a question that we need to be able to answer on the positive. How can we stop this avalanche of spiritual loss, this sad ingredient of the love of other things getting in between? Shall we try to understand how to replenish that loss? When I was doing my nurse's training in the Adventist hospital, there was a whole heap of young people there who were on fire for God; and then they slowly saw that they were losing that on fire attitude in the institution. So they were mourning and lamenting about it. And as they were doing that, I was thinking, Why lament about it? Why don't we get into it and do something about it? But the moment I tried to do something about it, it soon died out because it was a condition they were in and they would not come out of it. So we must do something about it when we can see it happening to us. The Faithful and True Witness knows exactly what is going on in our heart, and when these dark little shadows come in between and they start to soften and weaken our fervour for the Lord, what does He say we should be doing?

Do the First Works

Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first

works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

The True Witness is here saying, “You had a love there, you had that first love, that vibrancy of love towards Me, the message, and prayer, and all that is involved with it; but now you’ve lost it. Remember what you had; look back where you last saw that light, and repent, and do the first works.” This is something to be done—the first works. What was it that created that first affectionate love toward Jesus, that made us bold to express our love for the things that we had found? What was it? Was it not that you saw Him in relation to your sinful self? Wasn’t it His saving act at the cross which awoke that deep response of appreciation for the amazing love that God and Jesus have for you and me? There was the trigger point, the contrast of my sinful self that I have come from, and His amazing love that I saw to me. This was what filled the heart with love and contrition. And now Jesus says, Look back and do the first work; recapture that experience by doing that first work. What was it? Jesus, the One altogether beautiful, drew near to you as you confessed your sin to Him. As we confess to Him and surrender to Him because we see our sad condition. And then, as you saw that, you wanted to share it with others.

I never cease to marvel that in a church, people have to be inspired by a pep talk to go into missionary work. This is what I have observed over the years—these meetings, these missionary pep talks. What do you have to have that for when you have your

first love? You don't need to go out and do missionary work under the pressure of being commanded to go out and work.

Hebrews 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

What are we called to do? Holding *the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

We are saved by hope. It is not a hope that can be seen; it is just simply recognising my condition and believing in the precious sacrifice of Jesus, so that I have this precious hope although I feel so bereft because of my past sinfulness. The fact is that many people think, "Well, that's the past; I'm now forever God's, and that's wonderful;" and therefore they lose their love. Strange that.

Excited, But Cold-hearted and Frozen

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are coldhearted, and appear as if frozen, in the cause of God. {2T 212.3}

You know, when you go to the church and everybody is all sober-faced and serious; and there's no joy; it is all just what we do as a routine. But the moment that you take them outside and you talk

to them about something exciting in the world, all of a sudden they come alive. This is the sort of picture that is described here.

Here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. Upon this theme it is sin to be calm and unimpassioned. {Ibid.}

I marvel over this many times in the human nature. If there is something to excite you out there, no matter how tired and weary we may be, all of a sudden we have all the energy there to keep us going. But the moment we come to the calm application of God's word, there tends to be a relaxing and a loss of enthusiasm. Strange, isn't it? And this is also why some people go to sleep in the church; because there is nothing to get the energies active when we stop to realise what God has done for us. But there are eternal interests involved here, and *it is sin* to be unimpassioned when it comes to this.

Wonderful Theme for the Formalist

The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotion. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully comprehend. The length, the breadth, the height, the depth, of such amazing love we cannot fathom. The contemplation of the matchless depths of a Saviour's love should fill the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole

character. The language of the apostle is: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." We also may look toward Calvary and exclaim: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." {*Ibid.*}

This is what really makes you become energetic and effervescent for the Lord.

Considering at what an immense cost our salvation has been purchased, what will be the fate of those who neglect so great salvation? What will be the punishment of those who profess to be followers of Christ, yet fail to bow in humble obedience to the claims of their Redeemer... {2T 213.1}

This is the sad story of people who fall into disarray spiritually.

Repeat the First Love Activity

So heartfelt confession, recognition of one's own condition prompted by viewing Jesus, incorporated the first works. It is this that created that first love; and Jesus is saying, What was it that created it? Do it again, the first works. Become enthusiastic about your own case, of your own discovery of your recent past that wasn't so perfect, and Jesus' perfection stands there, and you see that He loves you still. How many times people lament, Oh I've lost my first love; or, Oh I'm so terrible, so sinful. We have forgotten that we are to look at this beautiful picture of Jesus and

again become animated. “Look, He loves me in spite of my weakness again, in spite of my failure again, in spite of my discovery of more misery about myself; He loves me still in spite of all that. This is the first works— to concentrate on that activity, to realise what Jesus is like, even though I am not like Him, and to see Him loving me even though I have fallen so short of His righteousness.

It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. {COL 159.4}

At the beginning we had this overwhelming sense, Oh, He loves me so much; and we gave up self, we gave Him our heart, and there was this joy that overflowed the soul. But *it is not only at the beginning* that this is to take place.

At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely. {Ibid.}

To be living witnesses of God’s goodness, this is the only way we can do it.

The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern

the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves. {COL 160.1}

In fact, that was the amazing story of the first works. I didn't even feel that I was worthy; Jesus was worthy. He was the One who took me from the gutter. He was the One who took Mary Magdalene from her gutter experience; and she served Him with love ever after. He has picked us up from our past, and that was the first love. And to keep on seeing those elements of our nature, the nearer we come to Jesus, we see Him better every day; He is more beautiful every day because I see myself worse every day. This is the transaction. This is the first works. To *hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end*, or, to *hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*. The *beginning*, the first works. We don't have to go over the past that we have already confessed, but the beginning activity is to remain our focus, the activity of discovering an aspect about me that I hadn't thought of before but which is now there because I have seen Jesus more brilliantly; and I go over the same ground of discovering the brilliance of Christ and discovering my weakness, and holding my confidence in His wonderful love for me.

No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ. {SC 65.1}

To have this deep-seated love of Jesus dwelling in my heart, what must I see? I must see the moral deformity in my own person. And if we don't see that, *it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ.* So the nearer I come to Jesus, the more I will see the deformity inside of me.

The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. {SC 65.2}

Can you see the first works? It must be repeated. We often think, I had it back there; why don't I have it now? Because I am not doing this, that's why. A view of my sinfulness, which I must see, will drive me to Him who can pardon me. *And when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in a most powerful way.*

The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image. {SC 65.2}

But the more fully we will see how immoral we are in nature. But I will keep on rejoicing in this amazing mercy that God has towards me. So Jesus becomes very close to our heart, and we become animated to glorify Him because of this confidence of the hope, the beginning of the confidence that we have had; not to let that grow cold, but to keep it on fire in this way.

Keep the Fire of Love Burning

It is Jesus alone who keeps our spirituality and love tender and ever fresh.

We lose much by not dwelling constantly upon the character of Christ. {7BC 907.6}

We can't just say, Oh, we've got to look at Him more. *Do* it. Only as we dwell upon what we are studying does it become bigger and bigger— studying the life of Jesus, enjoying His wonderful, amazing story, applicable to myself when I see myself as I am. We lose much by not doing that.

Those who in these days of the love growing cold will survive in fervour and devotion to God are demonstrated in the word of God. They are written of there. Read how these people, in these last days when everything is cold around them, are on fire. These are the 144,000. God has compassion towards them; it is a continuing experience.

Ezekiel 9:4 And the LORD said unto [the angel which had the writer's inkhorn by his side], Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

The sealing of the 144,000 is dependent upon a people who know the sins and see the mercy of God. The Spirit of Prophecy again comes to our aid in the explanation of this:

Sighing and Crying

The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. With tears they warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they humble themselves before the Lord on account of their own transgressions. {5T 474.4}

We often pick up the thought that “Yes, we’ve got to tell the sinners what terrible sinners they are.” Yes, we indeed read that they are sighing and crying for the sins that are done in the church, so we start to think we have to correct people around us. Yes, we *are* to warn them with the messages that are given us; but the sorrow is even more intense *on account of their own transgressions.*

The wicked mock their sorrow, ridicule their solemn appeals, and sneer at what they term their weakness. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. {*Ibid.*}

Isn't that a profound understanding? Those who think they are quite alright, have no sense of God's greatness and of the nobility and strength that is needed. But these people give evidence of this nobility of character by the deep sorrow they feel about their own condition.

It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, and their eyes are fixed upon His perfect purity, that they so clearly discern

the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Their contrition and self-abasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God's holy law. {Ibid.}

You see, the people who are ultimately saved are those who don't claim perfection. *Their contrition and self-abasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God's holy law.* But these people we are focusing on are confessing their transgression, and are rejoicing in the mercy of God to them.

Meekness and lowliness of heart are the conditions for strength and victory. The crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. Blessed are these mourners, for they shall be comforted. {Ibid.}

When you become comforted by the Lord, doesn't that fill you with joy? We are inspired to this kind of life by those beautiful details of Christ in application to our own salvation.

Fixing Our Eyes upon Christ

Dear brethren and sisters, we have an exalted knowledge of God's character in the revelation of Christ, in the revelation of His righteousness. The people out there are seeking God's truth. Will we let our spirituality grow cold because of the abounding

sin around us, and chill others when they meet us by the formalities that we still rely on, instead of the joy that animates? The genuine people out there, they are looking for the genuine enthusiasm for Jesus. So the message that we are to take away from this revelation of Jesus that the love of many is growing cold, is to take firm hold of constantly doing the first works—applying the beauty of Jesus to my soul, seeing myself in my deplorable state, coming with contrition and repentance, mourning over my mistakes, and seeing the wonderful mercy of God effected towards me.

We are to constantly look Jesus. What are we to do?

Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. {6BC 1098.1}

This is what Jesus said; “Do the first works.”

When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {Ibid.}

I am captivated by the amazing revelations of God in relation to my sinfulness. We are to behold Jesus by *studying His life as given in His word*, and gazing upon it, like a beautiful gemstone, and

marvelling at all the different facets of its glory, looking at Jesus from all different angles. And as we do this, it begins to become enthusing. It is so essential that we spend our time doing that frequently. If we haven't the time to read during the day because we are working, then we remember what we were reading, and we make it big before us.

Let us be doers of these words of Jesus, *Do the first works*; if we have lost our first enthusiasm. May this be our work for the future so that we will be among that people who are sighing and crying for the sins that are done in Israel; this people who are in unutterable sorrow as they realise their own condition, but who rejoice in the mercy of God for them.

Amen.